

TO THE EDITOR OF THE EUGENICS REVIEW.

Sir,—Referring to Major Darwin's interesting article on Birth Control, in your issue of October, 1920, it is important to know how it will apply to Australia and New Zealand. The recent report of the Australian Basic Wage Commission shows that the average number of children per married worker in Australia is 1.8, and the average number of children per adult worker only 1.0. Only 40% of the workers have any children at all, and another 40% are not even married. The Basic Wage Commission recommends a basic wage of £5 15s. 6d. a week, as being required by a man with three children. At the present time, the industries are paying for 450,000 non-existent wives, and 2,100,000 non-existent children, in addition to which the Government pays a maternity bonus of £5 for every child born. Mr. Hughes declares the problem insoluble, and proposes that the basic wage should be £4, with 12s. extra for each child per week. If birth control like this should come to prevail in Europe, it would cut off the stream of immigrants, on which Australia depends for maintaining the level of her population. In such case, will Major Darwin be good enough to tell us how long it will take the above rate of birth control to depopulate Australia, and open the door to Asiatics? The struggle between nations depending on birth control and those depending on numbers resolves itself into a question of efficiency. If the efficiency rests on in-born qualities, the former may hold their own; but, if it merely rests on requirements, whether intellectual or material, then nothing prevents the other nations adopting those acquirements, in which case numbers must prevail. Hence, the adoption of eugenic ideals is imperative for us, if we wish to survive. In New Zealand birth control prevails in a similar, but much less marked degree. It is mainly due to the extreme difficulty of obtaining domestic help, no matter what wages are offered. This greatly restricts home and family life, reducing hospitality and the entertainment of friends, and diverting social intercourse to public meetings and amusements. Its effect on the rising generation is disastrous, and accounts for much of the immorality and general deterioration of conduct.* Family life in Japan is said to be in some respects, and especially in regard to the training of children, who learn discipline, much superior to ours.† Possibly the future may bring us some compensation, if we become better acquainted with the inhabitants of that country. We may yet have something to learn from the Japanese, who have a longer experience as a highly civilised nation than we have. Our antipathy to them is solely due to their ability to exist and work hard on a lower standard of living than we do. Unfortunately, our high standard is confined to Trade Unions, while those outside the Unions are driven to a much lower standard, or may perish, if not occasionally killed. So it does not appear that birth control has benefited either Australia or New Zealand.

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*In the EUGENICS REVIEW, July, 1918, Dr. Grassl attributes the great increase of prostitution in Germany to the loss of home and family life. P. 125.

†Prof. McMillan Brown, who has spent much time in all parts of Japan, says no children in the world are so well cared for as in Japan.